



## 2024 National Immigration Summit

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 | 12:00PM – 2:00PM CT

**Register Here**

<http://weblink.donorperfect.com/2024ImmigrationSummit>

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**Hannah Liu**– Policy Analyst, Immigration and Immigrant Families, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Hannah Liu is a policy analyst for CLASP's immigration and immigrant families team. She provides research support on policy solutions that promote the health and wellbeing of immigrant children, youth, and families. Prior to joining CLASP, Hannah interned at a local immigrant-centered nonprofit called Visionary Pathways, where she assisted with community pandemic relief efforts. She also interned at the district office of Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, where she provided support on immigration casework and immigrant advocacy. Hannah graduated magna cum laude from St. Olaf College with a bachelor's degree in political science and music. During her time in college, she was heavily involved with campus civic engagement efforts, using peer-to-peer organizing to increase student turnout in the 2020 election. She also served as Vice President of the College Democrats for Minnesota, building a statewide network of young people to share organizing power, knowledge, and resources.



**Christine Thomas**– Sr. Associate Director, Center for Social Measurement and Evaluation, CHILDREN AT RISK

Part of the CSME data team for CHILDREN AT RISK, Christine earned her master's degree in applied demography with a concentration of health disparities and mental health. Her areas of interest include the structural determinates of health (conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age) and their influence on wellness outcomes. Through data, she seeks to disrupt the current practices and policies which contribute to disparities for children in Texas. By incorporating 8 years of clinical and behavioral experience along with data informed methods, Christine works to engage social services organizations, foundations, researchers and any other collaborates who seek to improve outcomes of children most affected in Texas.

Based in San Antonio, Christine earned her BA from the University of Iowa and her Master's of Science degree from University of Texas San Antonio.



**Wendy Cervantes** – Director of Immigration & Immigrant Families, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Wendy Cervantes is director of immigration and immigrant families. In this role, she oversees the organization's cross-team work to develop and advocate for policies that support low-income immigrants and their families. She is an expert on the cross-sector policy issues that impact children of immigrants, including economic security, child welfare, immigration, education, health care, and human rights. Prior to joining CLASP, Ms. Cervantes was Vice President of Immigration and Child Rights at First Focus where she led the organization's federal policy work on immigration and established the Center for the Children of Immigrants. Ms. Cervantes also served as Director of Programs at La Plaza, a Latino community-based organization in central Indiana, where she oversaw the implementation and evaluation of education, health, and social service programs. Earlier in her career, Ms. Cervantes worked at the Annie E. Casey Foundation where she managed the national immigrant and refugee families and the District of Columbia portfolios. She also has experience as a community organizer and an adult ESL instructor. The proud daughter of Mexican immigrants, Ms. Cervantes holds an M.A. in Latin American Studies and Political Science from the University of New Mexico and a B.A. in Communications from the University of Southern California.



**Heather Gonzalez** – Vice President, American Families United

Heather Vice President of American Families United, joined the organization in 2017. She has helped organize multiple national lobby day events and other roundtable events across the country. This year, Heather has been a leader in the coalition calling for President Biden to grant administrative relief to the long term, undocumented spouses of US citizens. Heather works in Commercial Lending and holds a Masters in Public Administration.



**Ignacia Rodriguez Kmec** – Senior Immigration Policy Associate, National Immigration Law Center (NILC)

Ignacia Rodriguez Kmec is the Senior Immigration Policy Associate at the National Immigration Law Center. Mrs. Rodriguez Kmec engages in legislative and administrative advocacy focusing on immigration executive actions and congressional action on immigration. She also engages in policy analysis, education, and advocacy to support the integration of low-income immigrant youth through access to education. Mrs. Rodriguez Kmec's experience as an activist in the immigrants' rights movement and as an undocumented student has led to her devotion to improving the lives of low-income immigrants. She holds an A.A. from Santa Monica College, a B.A. from UCLA, and a J.D. from UCLA School of Law.



**Jason Boyd** – Vice President for Policy and Advocacy, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

As Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)'s Vice President of U.S. Federal Policy, Jason Boyd oversees initiatives to advance the rights of unaccompanied children under U.S. federal law and policy. Throughout his career, he has worked to strengthen protections for vulnerable immigrant populations. Before joining KIND, Jason was Policy Counsel for the American Immigration Lawyers Association, where he advocated for a more humane legal immigration process and fairer treatment of asylum seekers. He previously served as an Immigration Law Analyst at the CIS Ombudsman's Office, helping develop recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services programs. He also worked as an Asylum Officer at USCIS, adjudicating the asylum applications of unaccompanied children and other protection seekers who had fled persecution. Jason detailed as Minority Counsel to the U.S. House Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security. He earned his B.A. from the University of North Carolina and his J.D. with honors from the George Washington University Law School.



**Adriana Cadena** – Campaign Director, Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF)

Adriana Cadena joined the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) campaign in early 2022 and has led the growth of the PIF campaign to a robust national coalition of over 650 member organizations at the intersection of immigration and public benefits working to increase and expand access for immigrant families. Adriana provides leadership

on the coalition's strategic programmatic direction, policy priorities, community engagement initiatives, coalition building, narrative building, and operations. Adriana drives PIF strategic planning with engagement from PIF's Executive Committee, Steering Committee, and general membership. In addition, she is responsible for fundraising to achieve PIF's vision, mission, and goals.

With over 20 years of experience in advancing the well-being of low-income immigrants through organizing, advocacy, and organizational leadership, Adriana grounds herself on the everyday challenges faced by her community on the U.S.-Mexico border and her own experience as an undocumented immigrant child growing up in a small Texas town.

Adriana's career expands to working with prominent national organizations, including USAHello, the NALEO Educational Fund, and the Service Employees International Union, to local organizations on the U.S.-Mexico border. Adriana holds a bachelor's in foreign service from Georgetown University and a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas–Rio Grande Valley.



**Astou Thiane** – Director of Policy and Advocacy, ImmSchools

Astou Thiane was born in Dakar, Senegal, immigrated to the United States at the age of seven and was raised in Harlem, New York City. She learned about her immigration status as a high school student and struggled to access higher education due to limitations based on this status. In 2013, she received DACA status, which granted her the

ability to work, allowing her to finance her education without any state, federal, or private aid. Because of her passion for empowerment through education, Astou became a literacy teacher in 2015 and worked for the next five years delivering high-quality instruction and advancing equity for immigrant students in New York City middle schools. In 2020, Astou became the Assistant Principal of Humanities at Canarsie Ascend Middle School in Brooklyn, New York where she supported ELA teachers as they

navigated the complexities of executing high-quality and equitable remote instruction during a global pandemic.

By 2021, Astou was selected as a Teach For America Capitol Hill Fellow where she leveraged her experiences as an undocumented and black educator to impact equitable outcomes for marginalized communities of color at the office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren. She currently leads policy and advocacy efforts at ImmSchools, an immigrant-led non-profit organization that works to transform K-12 schools into safe and welcoming spaces for immigrant-origin students and families.



**Linda Corchado** – Senior Director of Immigration, CHILDREN AT RISK

Linda Corchado is Director of CHILDREN AT RISK's Children's Immigration Network. Linda is a graduate of Swarthmore College where she studied Political Science and minored in Latin American Literature. Linda lived in New York City where she attended law school at Cardozo and then moved back to El Paso where she spent many years

working in immigration advocacy around such issues as separation of families, unaccompanied minors and working to reform the immigration court system. Linda's passion for immigration issues comes from personal experience in that both of her parents were born in Mexico and Spanish was her first language.



**Susan Reed** – Director, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center

Susan E. Reed co-founded MIRC at the Michigan Advocacy Program to expand access to immigration legal services and advance pro-immigrant policy in Michigan. Susan has led and partnered on advocacy and impact litigation that has: developed public funding for immigration legal services at the federal, state, county, and city level; preserved and expanded Medicaid access

for approximately 85,000 noncitizens; recovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost and stolen wages for immigrant workers; advanced civil rights for detained immigrants and people of color targeted by immigration enforcement; and secured legal immigration status and citizenship for thousands of individual clients. Susan was appointed by the Michigan Supreme Court to the inaugural Foreign Language Board of Review following her successful advocacy for the court rule that created the board and expanded language access in Michigan's courts. She represents immigrant and immigrant rights interests as a long-time member of the Michigan State Planning Body

for Legal Services and as part of several State Bar of Michigan initiatives. She is a proud member of the first class of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Leadership Network. Susan is a graduate of Marquette University and the University of Minnesota Law School.



**Liza Schwartzwald** – Director of Economic Justice and Empowerment, The New York Immigration Coalition

Liza Schwartzwald is a policy and advocacy specialist, attorney, social worker, and trained mediator with a deep commitment to social and economic progress in New York. She is currently the Director of Economic Justice and Family Empowerment at the New York Immigration Coalition, where she leads city and state campaigns

ranging from the Working Families Tax Credit to protecting NYC's Right to Shelter. She helped found the first-of-its-kind child care subsidy program for undocumented children in NYC and led the successful campaign to expand the Empire State Child Credit, with over \$550M of additional credits going out to families in the last two years.



**Andrea Kovach** – Health Justice Attorney, Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Andrea Kovach advocates for quality, affordable health care and coverage to be accessible to all families. Andrea works in close collaboration with organizations statewide and focuses on the intersection of immigrant eligibility for health coverage. Andrea contributes legal and policy knowledge to support initiatives identified by immigrants

impacted by injustice that build and enhance their power. Andrea is an engaged member of the Healthy Illinois Campaign, working to ensure a pathway to affordable, comprehensive health coverage for all immigrants. She helps convene the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) state policy working group and is a convener and Executive Committee member of the PIF-Illinois coalition, created to educate and resist the harmful public charge rule. Andrea also provides policy support to the Immigrant Health Academy and sits on the Steering Committee of the Illinois Alliance for Welcoming Health Care Providers. She also co-convenes and co-leads the Illinois Immigrant Access to Public Benefits Work Group. Andrea can be reached at [andreakovach@povertylaw.org](mailto:andreakovach@povertylaw.org)



**Louise El Yaafouri** – Owner & Lead Consultant, Diversified Consulting

Louise El Yaafouri **لويـز الـيعـفورـي** is a refugee and immigrant integration specialist and founder of Diversified Consulting. She is awarded for her pioneering contributions to multilingual education, trauma-informed practices and culturally-responsive pedagogy. Louise is the author of three books, including *Restoring Students' Innate Power*

(ASCD Press), dozens of articles, and widely implemented curricula. She is honored to have worked with folks from more than 90 countries on four continents. Diversified Consulting supports educational institutions, health care organizations, government teams, and nonprofits to ensure equity-forward, community-based solutions that increase welcoming and integration. DC's national and international project management expertise makes it a sought-after leader for facilitating dynamic, prosocial change.

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